

Disability Awareness Month

INCREASING AWARENESS THROUGH YOUR BUSINESS

It is important that all employees in your company have an awareness of people with disabilities, because they might encounter business contacts, clients and/or customers with disabilities. That awareness includes understanding how to interact with and make the company's services accessible to people with disabilities in order to maintain strong business relationships with them. This attitude projects a favorable company image not only to people with disabilities but also to the surrounding community.

In addition, understanding and awareness will help your employees adjust to and accept a co-worker who acquires a disability, and/or new employee with a disability.

The enclosed information offers ways your company can participate in Disability Awareness Month during March. If your company has a public relations or communications department, many of the activities can be planned and implemented by that office. If your company does not have a communications department, select an individual to chair your activities. You might want to form a committee to handle the various disability awareness projects.

Interacting with People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are people first; their disabilities come second. Proper communication with employees, customers and clients with disabilities is essential. The Governor's Planning Council's "Power of Words" brochure explains the correct language to use when communicating with a person with a disability. The brochure can be posted on bulletin boards, included with employee paychecks, routed throughout the office or reprinted in a company newsletter. If you have not ordered "Power of Words" brochures for your company and would like to, call Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice).

General Awareness

There are many ways to increase awareness among your employees and/or customers about people with disabilities. Following are some projects other organizations have successfully implemented for Awareness Month in previous years:

- Place Awareness Month posters in hallways, on bulletin boards, in the lunchroom, in windows and any other high-traffic areas where they will be seen by many people.
- Carry a Disability Awareness Month message on indoor and/or outdoor message boards, print advertisements, answering machines, fax cover sheets, metered mail, grocery bags, placemats, tray liners and billing statements. Use camera-ready artwork along with your message. Be creative!
- Enclose stuffers with employee paychecks, customer and client mailings/billings and customer purchases.
- Organize an Awareness Month Mini-Conference and invite speakers to discuss hiring and working with people with disabilities and making accommodations for them. Employees who have disabilities can also relate their own personal workplace experiences.
- Set up an Awareness Month display in the lobby of your building. Include books, information and items that might aid people with disabilities in job performance.

Materials are available for posters, paycheck/bill stuffers, postal indicia messages, grocery bags, print and radio PSAs and Web sites. Information packets are available for setting up a speaker event and for designing a display. To place an order, contact Kim Dennison at (317) 631-6400 (voice).

Your Company Newsletter

A newsletter is an effective tool for passing information on to employees and customers. In your March newsletter, devote a page to Disability Awareness Month. You may use the general release the Council mails to Indiana media, or write your own articles. Write about an employee who has a disability or someone who has a child with a disability. Interview the CEO for his or her feelings on people with disabilities. What is the company's policy on hiring people with disabilities? Provide tips for interacting with people with disabilities and accessibility standards. Camera-ready art is included in this packet for use in newsletters or other publications.

Your Company Web Site

According to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Web site, you need to consider that many users might be operating in contexts that are very different from your own. These contexts include:

- They might not be able to see, hear, move or might not be able to process types of information easily.
- They might have difficulty reading or comprehending text.
- They might not have or be able to use a keyboard or mouse.
- They might have a text-only screen, a small screen or a slow Internet connection.
- They might not speak or understand fluently the language in which the document is written.
- They might be in a situation where their eyes, ears or hands are busy or interfered with (e.g., working in a loud environment).
- They might have an early version of a browser, a different browser entirely, a voice browser, or a different operating system.

For more information on making your company's Web site accessible, visit www.w3.org.

Accessibility

It is critical for persons with disabilities to have access to the same opportunities as people without disabilities. Your building should be accessible to employees, customers and clients with physical or sensory disabilities. Other buildings where business is conducted should also be accessible. The ADA requires that businesses remove, if readily achievable, architectural and communication barriers in the public areas of their existing facilities. Readily achievable barrier removal includes any action that is accomplished without great difficulty or expense. In many cases, it might include things such as adding grab bars in restrooms or ramping steps. In addition, ADA guidelines require businesses with 15 or more employees to make accommodations for employees with disabilities.

Businesses that make their facilities more accessible to people with disabilities are allowed a tax deduction. A maximum of \$15,000 can be deducted for the tax year in which the expense was incurred. The deduction is claimed by identifying it as a separate item when reporting other business expenses on the standard IRS form. Any amount in excess of \$15,000 might be added to the basis of the property that is subject to depreciation. For more information on this tax deduction, contact your local IRS office. (Refer to IRS code Section 190.)

To encourage ADA compliance by small businesses, the IRS also offers a Disabled Access Credit (Section 44 of the IRS Code). This allows a tax credit of up to \$5,000 a year, as long as expenditures are greater than \$250 and less than \$10,250. Up to 50 percent of “eligible access expenditures” can be deducted. Be sure to double-check these figures with your tax preparer to be sure they are the most up-to-date numbers available.

Please refer to the two Employer Resources pages at the end of this packet for additional programs that apply to your business.

Following is a checklist that can help identify accessibility “hot spots” in your building. Also listed are ways to make the building more accessible and compliant with the ADA.

Federal, state and local building codes might contain certain requirements for accessibility. The ACCESS Board has more information on standards for accessible design. Please call the board at (800) 872-2253 (voice/TT) for more information.

Getting Involved – Volunteer Incentives

Offer volunteer incentives during Awareness Month and throughout the year. Make a donation (\$25, \$50, \$100, \$500 or \$1,000) to a local disabilities organization – such as United Cerebral Palsy – for every hour that one of your employees volunteers time to the organization.

Getting Involved – Hiring People with Disabilities

The following information answers questions many employers have about people with disabilities and provides information to begin the process of hiring people with disabilities.

1. Productivity and Capability

The assumption that people with disabilities are unproductive is false. People with disabilities can be just as productive, loyal, punctual, educated and qualified as people without disabilities. Turnover among people with disabilities is generally low.

2. How to Locate Employees with Disabilities

There are several ways to attract people with disabilities to your company. Contact the Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services at 1-800-545-7763 (voice) and ask for the number of the local Vocational Rehabilitative Office. These and other local rehabilitation agencies specialize in placing people with disabilities in the workforce, and serve as a helpful liaison between the employer and potential employee.

“Supported employment” is one such service many organizations provide to their clients. Supported employment combines job procurement, placement, training and ongoing support for

people with disabilities. Job coaches work together with employers and people with disabilities to meet and match abilities, skills and needs of each party.

3. Incentives

Employers who hire people with disabilities should investigate the incentives available to them. With some incentives, it often costs less to employ a person with a disability than someone without a disability.

- Supported employment programs provide on-the-job training, counseling and ongoing support to employees with disabilities at no cost to the employer.
- The Job Training Partnership Act provides federal and state on-the-job training funds averaging 50 percent of a trainee's wages for the first six months of employment. Reimbursements for classroom training and services such as child care and transportation are also available if you qualify for the program. Contact your local employment office for more details.

RESOURCES

There are a variety of resources available about the ADA. Your company or organization might already have received literature about it. Here are sources of ADA-related information:

National ADA Resources

Great Lakes Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center

University of Illinois at Chicago
1640 Roosevelt Road (M/C 626)
Chicago, Illinois 60608
800-949-4232 (voice/TT)
312-413-1407 (voice/TT)
312-413-1856 (fax)
www.adagreatlakes.org

Job Accommodations Network

West Virginia University
918 Chestnut Ridge Road, Suite 1
P.O. Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
800-232-9675 (voice/TT)
www.jan.wvu.edu

U.S. Department of Justice-Americans with Disabilities

Disability Rights Section
Box 66738
Washington, D.C. 20035-9998
800-514-0301 (voice)
800-514-0383 (TT)
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Indiana ADA Resources

Indiana State ADA Steering Committee

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
2853 E. 10th Street
Bloomington, IN 47408-2601
812-855-6508 (voice)
812-855-9396 (TT)
812-855-9630 (fax)
www.isdd.indiana.edu

Family and Social Services Administration – Human Resources

402 W. Washington Street, Room E431
Indianapolis, IN 46207
317-233-6988 (voice)
317-232-1530 (fax)
www.state.in.us/fssa/ric_edwards@mailexcite.com (e-mail)

Indiana Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities

150 W. Market St., Suite 628
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-7770 (voice)
317-232-7771 (TT)
317-233-3712 (fax)
GPCPD@gpcpd.org (e-mail)

ATTAIN, Inc.

2346 S. Lynhurst, Suite 507
Indianapolis, IN 46241
800-528-8246 (voice)
812-486-8808 (voice)
317-486-8809 (fax)
CFULFORD@INDIAN.vinu.edu (e-mail)

Breaking New Ground Resource Center
Purdue University
225 S University Street
W. Lafayette, IN 47907-2064
765-494-5088 (voice)
765-496-1356 (fax)
www.ecn.purdue.edu/ABE/Extension/BNG/

Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Indiana Government Center North
100 N. Senate Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-232-2600 (voice)
800-628-2909 (voice)
800-743-3333 (TT)
317-233-4809 (fax)
www.state.in.us/icrc

Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services
4701 N. Keystone, Suite 222
Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-722-5555 (voice/TT)
317-722-5564 (fax)
800-622-4845 (voice)

Regional Resources

EmployAbilities
2000 Greenbush
Lafayette, IN 47904
765-420-1414 (voice)
888-423-5531 (voice)
765-420-1415 (fax)
jobfndr@cnfe.com (e-mail)

**Northwest Indiana ADA Project
Tradewinds Rehabilitation Center**
5901 W. 7th Ave., Box 6308
Gary, IN 46406
219-949-4000 ext. 281 or ext. 278 (voice)
219-944-8134 (fax)
TWRC@netnitco.net (e-mail)

**Indiana State Government Department of
Personnel**
402 W. Washington Street, Room W161
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-233-3320 (voice)
317-232-4555 (TT)
317-232-3089 (fax)
lhaskett@gwnet.isd.state.in.us (e-mail)

**Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Family and Social Services Administration**
402 W. Washington Street, Room W453
P.O. Box 7083
Indianapolis, IN 46207-7083
317-232-1319 (voice)
317-232-1427 (TT)
800-545-7763 ext. 1319 (voice)
www.state.in.us/fssa/

The Rehabilitation Center
3701 Bellemeade Ave.
Evansville, IN 47714
812-479-1411 (voice)
812-474-2351 (fax)

National Center on Accessibility
Indiana University
2805 E. 10th St., Suite 190
Bloomington, IN 47408
812-856-4422 (voice)
812-856-4421 (TT)
812-856-4480 (fax)
www.indiana.edu/~nca

Indiana Centers for Independent Living

ATTIC Center for Independent Living

1721 Washington Ave
Vincennes, IN 47591
812-886-0575 (voice)
800-962-8842 (voice)
812-886-0575 (TT)
812-886-1128 (fax)
INATTIC1@aol.com (e-mail)
www.theattic.org

Allen County League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc.

5821 S Anthony Blvd
Fort Wayne, IN 46816
260-441-0551 (voice/TT)
800-889-3443 (voice/TT)
260-441-7760 (fax)
www.the-league.org

Southern Indiana Center for Independent Living (SICIL)

Stone City Mall
3300 West 16th Street
Bedford, IN 47421
812-277-9626 (voice)
812-277-9627 (TT)
800-247-4128 (voice/TT)
812-277-9628 (fax)
sicil@tima.com (e-mail)

Wabash Independent Living and Learning Center (WILL)

7J Meadows Center
Terre Haute, IN 47803-2373
812-232-9455 (voice)
877-915-9455 (voice)
812-234-1536 (fax)
teresa@thewillcenter.org

Everybody Counts, Inc.

9111 Broadway, Ste. A
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-769-5055 (voice)
888-769-3636 (voice)
219-756-3323 (TT)
219-769-5325 (fax)
ecounts@netnitco.net (e-mail)
www.thetimesonline.com/org/everybody_ecounts@netnitco.net

Indianapolis Resource Center for Independent Living

2110 N. Capitol
Indianapolis, IN 46202
317-596-6440 (voice/TT)
800-860-7181 (voice/TT)
317-596-6446 (fax)
ircil@netdirect.net (e-mail)

Northern Indiana Independent Living Services (NIILS)

702 Williams Street
Elkhart, IN 46516
219-293-7509 (voice)
219-293-8783 (fax)

Independent Living Center of Eastern Indiana

3771 South A
Richmond, IN 47374
(765) 939-9226 (voice)
(877) 939-9226 (voice)
ilcein@ruralpek.com

RESOURCES

General Information

Opportunity 2000: Creative Affirmative Action Strategies for a Changing Workforce. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by the Hudson Institute. Chapter 3, "Disabled Workers" discusses barriers; hiring people with disabilities; recruiting the right employee; recruiting through rehabilitation agencies, disability organizations, colleges and universities; training employees with disabilities; eliminating barriers; employee orientation; aiding career development; and more. Single copies are \$5. To purchase a copy with Visa/MasterCard/Discover call (202) 512-1800 (voice). To purchase by check or money order, make check payable to Superintendent of Documents and mail to Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Refer to stock # 029-014-00242-9 when ordering by phone or mail.

Accessibility

Job Accommodation Network can assist you in making accommodations for employees with disabilities. Call (800) 526-7234 (voice/TT).

The Regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers can provide information on the most economical ways to adapt the workplace for a person with disability. Call (800) 949-4232 (voice).

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) provides information on accessibility standards for buildings. Write to: ANSI, 1430 Broadway, New York, NY 10018.

Technology

The Regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers provide ADA information, assistance and copies of ADA documents supplied by the EEOC and the Department of Justice. The documents are available in standard print, large print, audio cassette, Braille and computer disk. Please call (800) 949-4232 (voice/TT) for more information, and to locate the regional center nearest you.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Conley, M. E. (1988). *And justice for all: Building understanding of citizens with developmental disabilities*. Dayton, OH: Public Images Network.

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